

Developing a Sheep Marketing Educational Website for Educators and Novice Producers

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SCAN FOR WEBSITE

Introduction & Need

Producers are looking to diversify their businesses (USDA, 2020). Declining sheep numbers and other factors such as inflation and consumer values are driving the change (ALB, 2023; ASI, 2020). Available online resources lack commentary, supporting materials, and various relevant examples.

Needs Assessment

A needs assessment questionnaire was developed to produce results that would guide the project. It was dispersed through social media and breed directories.

Demographics

- Producers from 41 states responded, years of experience ranged 1 - 80, flock size ranged 1 - 1000+
- Marketed products included meat, wool, wool products, animals, grazing, and others
- Producers market products online, off the farm, locally, through market cooperatives, and other ways

Results

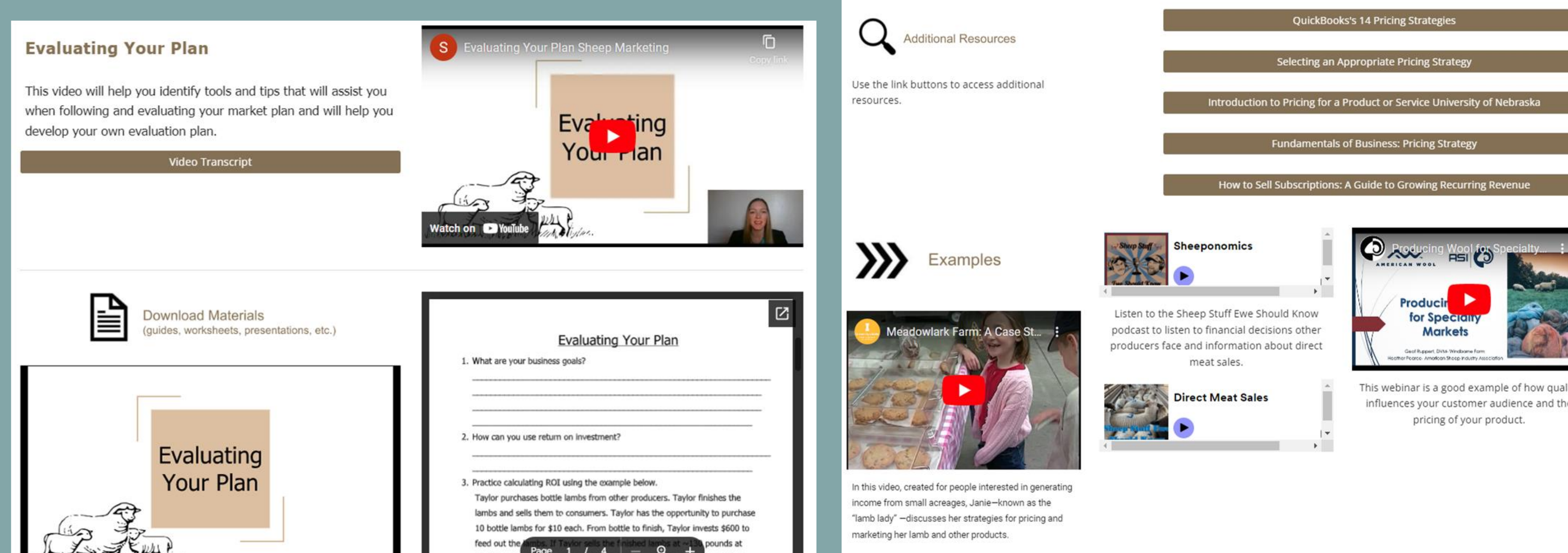
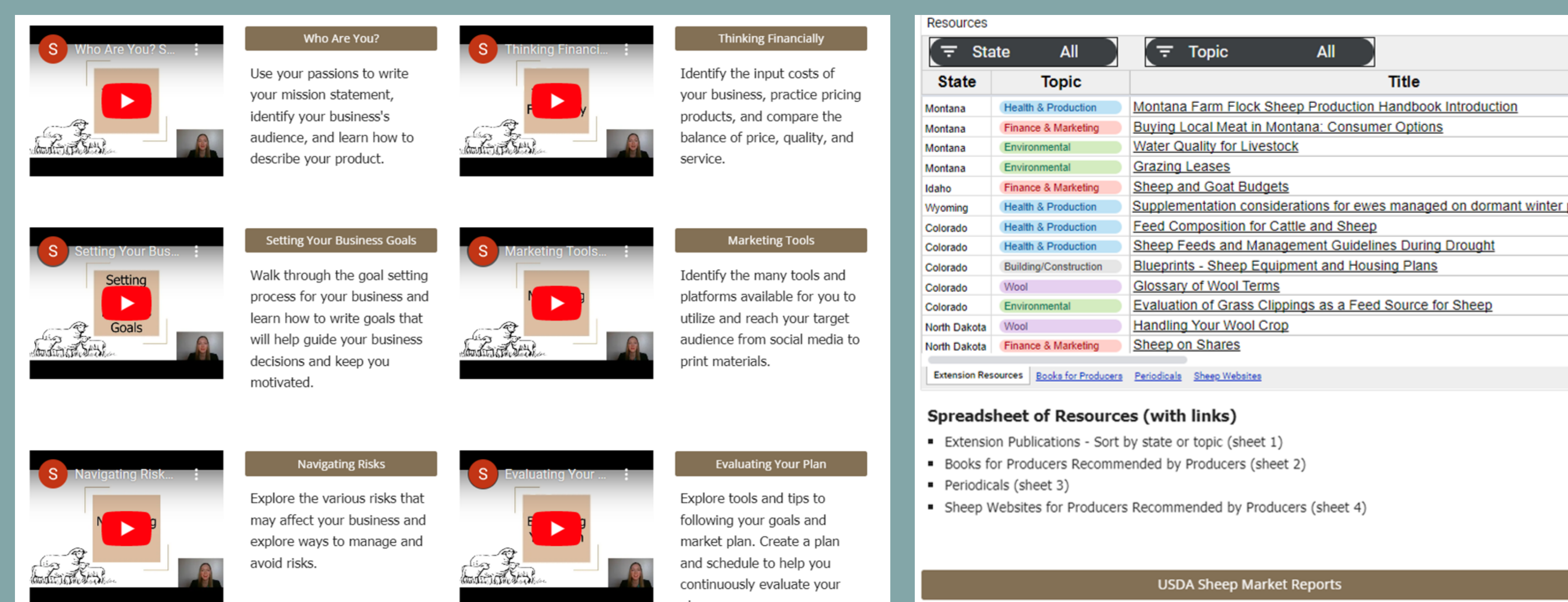
- Producers care about staying informed, market and feed prices, animal health and welfare, and production costs
- Most producers reported marketing off the farm, or off the farm. Under other, producers reported word of mouth as a common marketing strategy.
- Top 5 resources used were: other producers, periodicals, social media, extension educators, and sheep101.info. Top 5 resources “Would definitely use” were: **websites**, extension educators, an **online resource bank**, articles/blogs, and YouTube.

Costs & Resources Needed

- Free Google Sites and Google account
- \$25 video editing subscription
- Website owner is responsible for upkeep
- Human resources (time)
- Users need access to a device and the internet. Users may also need access to a printer and office supplies.



The goal of the sheep marketing website was to provide short videos that guide producers through the steps of developing a market plan with relevant examples, supporting handouts, and resources.



Website

Self-directed Producer Modules (videos, industry examples, video transcripts, study guides, and additional resources)

1. Who Are You?
2. Thinking Financially
3. Setting SMART Goals
4. Marketing Tools
5. Navigating Risks
6. Evaluating Your Plan

Resource Bank

- Links to 1,350 extension publications
- Books that producers reported using
- Sheep industry periodicals
- University sheep social medias and websites
- Link to the USDA market report
- Links to sheep industry focused podcasts

Educator Resources

- National ANFR Agribusiness Systems Standards (The NCAE, 2015) & Family & Consumer Sciences Content Standard 5.7 (NASAFACS; 2018)
- Essential Questions
- Study guides with additional generic examples
- Extension activity links

Results to Date

- Receiving feedback (on-going) from educators, producers, and industry advocates. Reviewers “agree” and “strongly agree” the video content is valuable to their application and the website is easy to navigate.
- Extension educators can use the website to help sheep producers (and other livestock producers) create a marketing plan
- Educational resources for 4-H youth educators and agriculture teachers to help youth develop marketing plans for livestock projects
- CTE and Ag educators can use the website to teach business content using sheep industry examples.

Future Plans & Advice to Others

- Review the website annually for content updates
- Explore an alternative website platform to improve mobile accessibility
- Disseminate the information to producers and educators, by collaborating with state and national sheep associations/programs
- Share via extension events and journals
- Conduct a needs assessment to inform the design and website content and to know your users

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References

